



HANOI ROCKS

The Nottingham Tapes DVD

Cherry Red Films

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In the eighties, one of the hot internal feuds within heavy metal culture was the glam metal sanction versus the collective body of thrashers and the power, death and black metallers. Though long hair and earrings were acceptable amongst all practitioners and fans of heavy music, there was an uncertainty libido-wise that traditional metalheads found at odds with glam rockers. Never mind they'd grown up with KISS and TWISTED SISTER, both of whom embodied glam tendencies as much a rip and tear rock 'n roll ethos that endeared them to everyone. Still, the more popular heavy metal bands of the eighties (largely those cultivated in Los Angeles) bore effeminate exteriors yet deeply macho insides. They'd been shown the way by THE STOOGES and the NEW YORK DOLLS, bands you didn't fuck with because they were loud and trashy and they could back themselves up in a brawl if called upon. Still, the longer the eighties wore on, the heavier the mascara and the lipstick became caked in sweaty, sexually-tense rock clubs on the heels of MOTLEY CRUE, FASTER PUSSYCAT, RATT, GUNS 'N ROSES and of course the most notorious glam propagators of them all, POISON, mostly because the chicks dug it and chicks generally had more money to spend than dudes—amongst other things.

One of the few glam rock bands in rock history to be given a consensual reprieve from most headbangers—no matter their walk of life—was HANOI ROCKS. Dolling themselves from Helsinki, Finland, of all places, Michael Monroe and his towering plumed Woodstock mane would become the prototype hairstyle for would-be glam rockers and even straight-laced metal groups looking to gain an audience no matter the cost of their reps. The reason HANOI ROCKS was nearly considered untouchable from the glam bashers of the scene was because they could bring the noise onstage and their albums rocked as hard as anyone. Like GUNS 'N ROSES, once you got past the deliberately outrageous facades, it was the crash and burn noise bucket sound emanating from HANOI ROCKS on albums such as *Self-Destruction Blues*, *Back to Mystery City* and *Bangkok Shocks*, *Saigon Shakes*, *Hanoi Rocks* that won most people over.

Though HANOI ROCKS is still, by and large, a cult rock band in the grand scheme of things, bring up their name and an entire slew of rockers come out of the woodwork in support, which is why *The Nottingham Tapes* is likely to be an underground hit. The year is 1984 and HANOI ROCKS is at fragile point in their career when this concert at The

Palais in Nottingham, England was filmed. At the end of 1983, HANOI ROCKS drummer Nicholas “Razzle” Dingley was killed in an automobile crash driven by MOTLEY CRUE’s Vince Neil. In 1985, Michael Monroe would decide enough was enough and part company until starting the band back up again with Andy McCoy later in 2002.

Keeping all of this in mind, it’s easy to forget there’s trauma lurking in the HANOI ROCKS camp while watching the explosive energy of *The Nottingham Tapes*. Still, after you get over the in-your-face, balls-out presentation as the band belts out “Back to Mystery City,” “Up Around the Bend” and “I Can’t Get It,” the more this set wears on, the more you can detect an underlying fatigue despite a knockout performance though further songs like “Boulevard of Broken Dreams,” “Tragedy” and “Don’t Follow Me.” For every ounce of energy HANOI ROCKS expels in this stimulated set, the writing is on the wall if you keep a close eye. Still, Michael Monroe commands his stage regardless if Razzle is pounding away behind him or former CLASH drummer Terry Chimes, the latter of whom appears in this show. In fact, Monroe later takes the drum kit himself as HANOI ROCKS lets the crowd gather onstage with them (as ANDREW WK would become famous for doing many years later) on a totally-wrecked cover of the RAMONES’ “Blitzkrieg Bop,” which ends *The Nottingham Tapes* on an appropriate note. Though the sound quality of the video is decent, the only detriment is being unable to hear a large portion of Monroe blaring on his saxophone. However, for an almost 25-year-old video, *The Nottingham Tapes* is exciting and declarative of the madhouse glam production that made HANOI ROCKS deserving legends.